

**From:** Sean Strain  
**Sent:** Wed, 27 Apr 2022 22:45:23 -0400  
**To:** Dashew, Elyse C.  
**Cc:** Bailey, Thelma B.;Rhonda Lennon;Jones, Ruby M.;Sawyer, Carol E.;Marshall, Margaret S.;Sanders -Shipp, Lenora;Jennifer 1. De La Jara  
**Subject:** Re: Leading by example

Dear Elyse,

In response to your “memo”:

“pressured principals” regarding 9th grade novel should be read as informing a principal what two other principals had done to provide context for her decisions

2/23 “directed” re: mask policy - I suspect was actually a firm request/direction as the Superintendent communication was completely out of step with the Board policy, and I was absolutely asking that Board policy was implemented with fidelity

Re: BBAA, reinforcing Board policy is not out of step with BBAA as it IS “explicit Board action” that is being reinforced

Mar 2022 “directed ... Frank Barnes” - this was a request for public information/grades (summary of student performance/outcomes) in PowerSchool. If “requests” now constitute “directives” then I will file them as public records requests and call it a day. Unbelievable.

We will continue to agree to disagree regarding whether Akeshia’s transition of responsibilities note constituted HR Confidential information. That’s ok, as we agree to disagree as to whether remarks regarding Mr Winston’s conduct and performance were germane to the motion to terminate his contract as well. And apparently whether Mr Winston’s written admission of conscious violation of state law constituted Cause, which would have in turn saved the County taxpayers well over a half a million dollars in his contract buyout.

Re discussions with media outlets, I will endeavor to inform the Board of contact with media outlets. I may miss them every now and then - as I did when I ran into the Axios folks when walking to my truck after our last Board meeting.

Re allegations that I have leaked Confidential information, I strongly suggest you back up your allegations herein with evidence of confirmed Confidential information. This is a very serious charge and to accuse me of this action as you do with several other colleagues regularly, without evidence, is hearsay at best and likely slanderous. If you are going to level a charge of criminal activity, back it up. Seriously, if you are going to level a criminal charge - you’d better have some evidence to back it up.

Thanks for finding your way to a position where you are finally focused on our jobs as a Board of Directors - oversight and accountability for delivery of our core Mission. Regarding

“consequences,” by all means do what you need to do regarding your special interests and I will continue to serve the students and constituents to whom I swore an oath to serve, in line with the Mission, Vision and Goals we have adopted as a Board and in my role as a member of said Board of Directors.

Regards,  
Sean

On Apr 27, 2022, at 6:09 PM, Dashew, Elyse C. <[elysec.dashew@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:elysec.dashew@cms.k12.nc.us)> wrote:

Dear Sean,

What happens in the boardroom is likely to be echoed in the classroom. Board behavior sets the culture for an institution. This year the Board voted on our Operating Procedures Manual, in which we formalized Board Member expectations, as well as consequences for Board Member misconduct. If the Board is to credibly hold staff and students accountable for their actions, then we must also be willing to hold ourselves accountable to our adopted Operating Procedures, including our Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics. We must lead by example.

We are concerned about your actions regarding two sets of infractions. As agreed upon in the Board’s Operating Procedures, we (the chair and vice chair) held private meetings with you to address these concerns. The infractions have continued, and so we are now taking the next step of highlighting our concerns via this email. Please honor the expectations that the Board has agreed upon. Per Section 3.2 of BBAA-E, further infractions could result in *“possible removal by the Board chair from any leadership or committee positions, and/or public reprimand/censure as a means of separating the Board’s focus and intent from those of the offending member.”*

#### **MULTIPLE INFRACTIONS – DIRECTIVES TO STAFF**

On 2/15/22 you pressured principals to remove a book from curriculum, and on 2/23/22 you directed the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent to issue a particular statement about mask requirements. On 2/24/22, the chair and vice chair met with you to remind you not to give directives to staff. In our 2/24 conversation, we reminded you of [Policy BBAA](#): *No individual Board member will have the authority to commit, direct, or otherwise use school district funds, personnel, or speak on behalf of the Board (collectively, “Unauthorized Activities”) unless authorized to do so by law, Board bylaws, or explicit Board action.* We also reminded you of the Board’s Code of Conduct (3.1) in [Exhibit BBAA-E](#), specifically item 13: *I will honor the delegation of authority to the superintendent and will not interfere with the administration of the schools;* and item 14: *I will not give unsolicited operational advice or directives to staff members.* You acknowledged that you had dipped below the line, and that those actions were not appropriate for our governance role.

Following this conversation, in March 2022 you directed Dr. Frank Barnes to produce data regarding student grades. This was not a report that already existed. At your individual directive, staff had to dedicate resources to create this report.

***As a reminder, individual board members do not have the authority to direct staff.***

#### **MULTIPLE INFRACTIONS – MEDIA**

On April 7, the chair and vice chair met with you to ask if you forwarded Akeshia Craven-Howell's resignation letter (which is confidential personnel info) to the Charlotte Agenda. You said you did, although you argued that you did not at the time understand that it was confidential personnel info, and in fact you still "cannot see how that can be considered confidential personnel info". In addition to/regardless of the personnel concern, we reminded you that you violated Section 5.4 in the Board Operating Procedures Manual: *Any Board member who communicates with the media shall inform the Board Chair.* Following this conversation, you gave interviews to at least two media outlets, the Charlotte Observer (story published April 19) and Axios Charlotte (story published April 24). We only learned this by reading the published stories. There are also further allegations that you have leaked confidential information with media outlets. While evidence is lacking, the allegations are alarming enough that they are worth addressing in this email.

***As a reminder, please inform the board chair when you interact with the media. (And do not share confidential Board matters.)***

Sean, this Board needs to work together on behalf of our students. We hope we can turn a page, together, and focus our energy on solid strategic governance and collaboration.  
Best regards, Elyse and Thelma

Sean Strain  
District 6 Representative  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

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